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Wild animals out of place

In this paper, the idea of wild animals being "out of place" is explored. It is common to see headlines of wild animals wandering into cities, often leading to their death. Similarly, liminal species like pigeons, foxes, and rats, which thrive in urban environments, are often unwelcome and even labeled as "trash animals," prompting negative reactions and violent attempts to remove them. Interestingly, wild animals can also be perceived as "out of place" in their natural habitats. In Finland, discussions about large carnivores like wolves reveal that even the mere idea of their presence can create opposition and calls for their removal. This perceived out-of-placeness often leads to hostile and deadly actions against these animals. Human expansion and habitat loss due to land use and climate change are significant threats to wild animals, leading to increased conflicts with humans.

The paper examines the concept and ethical implications of this "out of placeness" of wild animals. It explores how and why wild animals are often seen out of place, and how and where does the transitioning from "right" place to "out of place" happen. The paper also explores the possibility of respectful and peaceful coexistence with wild animals.

Theoretical references are utilized from philosophical and anthropological analyses of impurity and dirt, as well as animal geography's research on the complex entanglements of human-animal relations with space, place, location, environment, and landscape. Mary Douglas's analysis of purity and impurity is referenced, particularly her idea of dirt as "matter out of place." Douglas suggests that humans understand the world in categories, and anything that falls outside these categories is seen as anomalous, impure, and dangerous. The relationship between purity, out-of-placeness, and discrimination against humans is also discussed, with examples like hostile architecture.

The paper explores when wild animals are in the "right" place, considering ideas of naturalness and nativeness. It discusses classificatory schemes that fix animals into certain conceptual places, highlighting the belief that species belong in specific geographic regions. The differentiation between nature and culture is examined, questioning whether any untouched nature remains in the Anthropocene era. Here, ecofeminist critiques of such hierarchical dichotomies are explored.

The paper aims to create a categorization of wild animal out-of-placeness. Wild animals can be seen out of place at least from an ecological, cultural and geographical point of view. The article concludes by questioning whose perspective determines the out-of-placeness of wild animals and highlights the agency of animals to resist human categories and create their own places.

Causal Explanation in Interpretive Social Anthropology

In textbook history of anthropology, a standard chapter covers the theoretical ‘protest’ from *interpretivist* anthropologists that arose during the 1960s.ⁱ This protest, which would become rather successful, railed against the naturalistic goal of providing an *explanation* of cultural particularities, and in terms of functions/purposes realised by *causal* processes of local social structure. This was a cornerstone of *structural-functionalist* epistemology of the previous generation of social scientists. The interpretivist school split off towards a new goal: providing *understanding* of cultural worldviews by *interpreting* symbolic meaning, using newly imported hermeneutic philosophy.ⁱⁱ This protest still rings today when social anthropologists rehearse the divide between *interpretive understanding* and *causal explanation*.

In this paper, I will analyse and compare two classic anthropological texts: one from either side of the divide, both found in most undergraduate curricula. The articles are by two contemporary American anthropologists: Rappaport’s *Pigs for the Ancestors* [1968]ⁱⁱⁱ and Geertz’s “Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” [1972]^{iv}. Rappaport represented *ecological functionalism*, while Geertz represented *interpretivism*. From these case studies, I will draw three lines of argument:

- 1) There are important similarities between the two schools: Both propose a model for a recurring and relatively delineated social phenomenon, both use it as a case study for more society-wide conclusions, both conclude that the practices have socio-political effects and serve meaningful function of fulfilling fundamental human needs. These similarities involve propositions about causal processes, and the evidence for them is causal in nature.
- 2) Something that *does* distinguish these two has to do, rather, with the different *kinds of explanandum effect* captured by the two models. Briefly put: Rappaport’s model captures a society’s ecological adaptation, while Geertz’s model captures a society’s existential self-reflection; Rappaport is interested in physiological survival, while Geertz is interested in psychological needs; bluntly put: ecology vs. art. I believe that this difference of explananda is a better way of distinguishing the two anthropological schools than what their attitude to causal explanation is.
- 3) These conclusions also speak to the debate in philosophy of social science concerning functionalist arguments and evidence for social mechanisms.^v An advantage of Rappaport’s model over Geertz’s is that it has an easier time answering counterfactual questions, which is a central explanatory virtue in recent interventionist theories of explanation.^{vi}

I will try to show that this opposition was never as strong in practice as it is typically made out to be in theory – a case also made by Kincaid^{vii}, and more recently by Small^{viii} and by Abend et al.^{ix}. By analysing these classic texts, using tools developed during recent decades of philosophical work on theory of causation,^x I hope to at least illustrate that causal explanation was never wholly abandoned.

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- ⁱ Ch. 10 in Barnard, Alan, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (2000). Cambridge University Press: UK.
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- ⁱⁱ From philosophers like Charles Taylor, Alfred Schutz, the later Wittgenstein, Peter Winch, Paul Ricoeur, Suzanne Langer, Hans-Georg Gadamer, etc.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Rappaport, Roy A. [1968] 1984. *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinean People* (2nd ed.). Yale University Press: New Haven & London. Often represented by its synopsis article: Rappaport, Roy A. 1967. “Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People”. *Ethnology*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 17–30.
- ^{iv} Geertz, Clifford. 1972. “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”. *Daedalus*, Vol. 101, No. 1, Myth, Symbol, and Culture, pp. 1–37. Republished in: Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books: US. pp. 412–53.
- ^v Friedman, Jonathan. 1979. “Hegelian ecology: between Rousseau and the World Spirit”. In P.C. Burnham & R.F. Ellen (eds.), *Social and Ecological Systems*, pp. 253–70. London: Academic Press.
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- ^{vi} Woodward, James. 2003. *Making Things Happen: A Theory of Causal Explanation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ^{vii} Kincaid (ibid.)
- ^{viii} Mario L. Small. 2009. “‘How many cases do I need?’: On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research”. *Ethnography*, 10(1), 5–38.
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- ^{ix} Abend, Gabriel; Caitlin Petre & Michael Sauder. 2013. “Styles of Causal Thought: An Empirical Investigation”. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 119, No. 3, pp. 602–654.
- ^x Woodward (ibid.)

Title of the presentation: “I Am... The Anorexia”: Symptoms as Forms of Communication of Anorexic Subjectivity”

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The agency of individuals with anorexia is seldom acknowledged in academic discourse. Phenomenological philosophy has examined anorexia as both a bodily experience and an internal conflict, where the once-controlled body increasingly dominates the subject (Fuchs, 2022; Osler & Krueger, 2022). In contrast, psychiatric research typically pathologizes anorexia as a distortion of body image, assuming patients are in denial of their “true size” and unreliable narrators of their own condition (DSM-5, 2013; APA, 2013). This paper challenges this discourse by offering a philosophical analysis of how individuals with anorexia may actively use clinically recognized symptoms, such as body dysmorphia, being underweight, and losing one’s period, as forms of intersubjective communication. What is communicated is an embodied anorexic subjectivity that, for some anorexics, functions akin to an identity.

The philosophical framework of this paper draws from two traditions: Michel Foucault’s writings on experience fundamentally being discursively structured, and Dorothe Legrand’s phenomenological theory of symptoms as intersubjectively communicative (2013, 2015). The first-person experience of anorexia is undeniably historically and discursively constructed, and gains its meaning from “historical a priori”. Foucault’s concept of subjectivation sheds light on how individuals with anorexia not only reproduce but also challenge socio-psychiatric power structures through their eating disorder. Legrand’s account complements this by showing how anorexic symptoms can function as forms of embodied communication and meaning-making. Drawing from Merleau-Ponty and psychoanalytic theory, Legrand emphasizes that symptoms are not merely pathological disruptions, but expressive acts that convey affective and relational meaning. This positions the anorexic body not just as a site of illness, but as a medium through which subjectivity and agency are articulated.

I analyze anorexic intersubjective communication in three contexts: interactions with medical professionals, relationships with fellow anorexics, and engagements with the broader public.

Drawing on autobiographies (Burton, 2020; Gay, 2016; Hornbacher, 1999) and qualitative interviews (Saukko, 2008), I argue that the anorexic subjectivities communicated through symptoms are often ambivalent. They conform to the diagnostic understanding of anorexia, but they do so strategically: to acquire a diagnosis while avoiding intervention; to be the “most anorexic patient” at the treatment centre; and to communicate a frowned-upon identity to the “healthy and normal other” while hiding it from loved ones. In doing so, I argue that individuals with anorexia express a level of agency previously dismissed on the basis of their pathology.

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Abstract

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Leibniz, Wolff and Forsskål on the Principle of Sufficient Reason

According to the principle of sufficient reason, everything has a reason, cause or ground, which explains its existence. The principle has been regarded as possible, powerful, fundamental, and self-evident. However, certain problems are related to it, such as how to verify it. The principle also may be untrue because it seems that there could be things, which do not have a reason or cause.

The principle of sufficient reason occurred implicitly before the early modern period. Its heyday happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by René Descartes' (1596–1650), Baruch Spinoza's (1632–1677) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's (1646–1716) rationalistic philosophies. Importantly, the latter named the principle and dealt with it explicitly for the first time. However, since Leibniz's treatment is not fully systematic, his contemporaries, especially Christian Wolff (1679–1754), explicated and improved his view. As expected, some doubted the principle. Relatively unknown Helsinki-born Peter Forsskål (1732–1763), a Humean naturalist, was one of the critics. He questions the principle in his dissertation *Dubia De Principiis Philosophiae Recentioris* (1756, 'Doubts on the Principles of More Recent Philosophy').

In this paper, I discuss Leibniz's, Wolff's and Forsskål's views of the principle of sufficient reason. I analyse and compare the views and examine their strengths and weaknesses.

The Freedoms of Self-Alienated Culture

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If we look at how the concept of alienation, of self-otherness, is predominantly applied today in social philosophy we can see that it usually builds on Karl Marx's early writings on the subject. Marx's concept is in itself largely inspired by G.W.F. Hegel's philosophy and especially Ludwig Feuerbach's reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From here Marx both appropriates parts of the concept but also changes important aspects and simultaneously criticizes Hegel for not truly overcoming alienation in his own philosophy. Only through changing the material basis of modern society can alienation truly be overcome, Marx insists.

But if we go back to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the section where he most explicitly thematizes alienation there, *Spirit alienated from itself: Cultural formation*, a very different concept emerges. Here we see alienation as a tension between inner and outer, present and future as well as individual and community. It serves as the backdrop to themes of Bildung, faith, enlightenment and absolute freedom. As such it is placed at the very core of the social ontology of the modern subject. This subject, as something always slightly outside itself, always uprooting itself from the given social world, always alienated, is in that paradoxical sense also free.

Here the question of alienation as a condition of possibility rather than a social ill comes to the fore, as a unique possibility opened up by the advent of modernity. To what extent is alienation as a phase in the development of social consciousness something to be overcome and to what extent something to be maintained? How can we relate to this paradoxical account of alienation? In this paper I engage with this intricate concept that Hegel puts forward in the section of Self-alienated culture and investigate what can be gained from returning to Hegelian alienation.

Functional Explanations for Social Norms

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1 Abstract

Functional explanations are commonly understood to account for the existence of a phenomenon by referring to the function or purpose it serves. The functionalist approach was for a long period the dominant framework in the social sciences (Turner and Maryanski 1979). Functional explanations, however, came under harsh criticism starting in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. They were criticized on several grounds: as inconsistent with a deductive-nomological (DN) model of explanation (Hempel 1965), as grounded on unsatisfactory analogies between social and biological needs (Elster 1983; Hempel 1965), and, ultimately, as a form of mystical free-floating teleology (Elster 1980) that explains a cause by its future effects without an empirically sound underlying mechanism connecting them. The cogency of these critiques, and the increasing emphasis on methodological individualism and mechanistic accounts of explanation (Elster 2015; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010), has fostered widespread distrust of functional explanations (Barnes 2003; Bicchieri, Muldoon, and Sontuoso 2023, p. 37). This received view, however, has not gone unchallenged. Critiques of functional explanations have been contested at a theoretical level (e.g., Cohen 1980; Kincaid 1990; Pettit 1996; Wright 1976). Moreover, the use of functional explanations and claims remains widespread in practice. The paper reviews how functional explanations for social norms have been advanced in several fields, from philosophy to the social and cognitive sciences, and defends the possibility of functional explanations for social norms while suggesting caution toward highly general functional theories of norm existence prevalent in the field. More precisely, Section 2 develops a brief “demystification” (Araújo and Ochoa 2025) of functional explanations, clarifying their structure, explanandum, and explanans. This section also addresses Kincaid’s (1990) response to the critiques briefly outlined here. Section 3 focuses on explanations of social norms, demonstrating that functional explanations remain widespread and influential in this field (Becker 2024; Gelfand et al. 2011; Hindriks and Guala 2015; Ullmann-Margalit 1977). In particular, it applies the conceptual demystification from the previous section to the diverse implementations of functional explanations, aiming to clarify a heterogeneous collection of practices. Section 3 also addresses the issues arising from general functional theories of norms proposed in philosophy. Finally, Section 4 examines the types of arguments and evidence required

to support functional hypotheses about the existence of social norms. It briefly discusses two case studies (Becker 2024; Gelfand et al. 2011) and argues that the challenges they face are not unique to functional explanations as such. Rather, these difficulties are shared by any explanatory approach, within and outside the social sciences, that relies on micro-founded models and causal inference.

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Abstract for the 2025 Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy in Tampere University

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Title: From Seeing To Blindness: Intuitive Cognition From Christian Wolff To Immanuel Kant

Abstract:

For many of the early modern rationalists such as René Descartes (1596–1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), and Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) the concept of intuition means the most distinct and certain form of intellectual knowledge, an immediate comprehension of intelligible objects. In the history of philosophy, Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) critical philosophy poses a radical change to this paradigm as he denies the possibility of intellectual intuition and argues that the only form of intuition available to the human mind is sensible intuition. In my paper, I will show that this notable change taking place between the aforementioned rationalists and Kant can be in part explained by ideas introduced by Christian Wolff (1679–1754). In the scholarship, Wolff's philosophy has already been recognized for the revival of the Leibnizian distinction of intuitive and symbolical knowledge and as a part of the historical continuum of the concept of intuition between Leibniz and Kant.

I study Christian Wolff's concepts of intuition in his works *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* and *Psychologia empirica methodo scientifica pertractata* comparing them to Immanuel Kant's distinction between concept and intuition in *Critique of Pure Reason* with a special emphasis on the metaphorical language of vision used by the authors. I argue that Kant's crucial distinction between intuition and concept is foreshadowed and perhaps influenced by Christian Wolff's distinction *notion from simple apprehension* (*notio cum simplici apprehensione*) and *intuitive judgement* (*judica intuitiva*). For Wolff both of these fall within intuitive cognition; the prior is essentially confused intuition whereas the latter is distinct intuition. This division separates intuition into different two operations of the mind. The ultimate consequence of this is that the immediate and complete comprehension on which intuition's superiority has been usually founded on is no longer seen to be inherent in intuition. I argue that the key functions of the Wolffian *intuitive judgements* are then later removed from intuition and transported into the field of understanding and concepts in Kant's philosophy. This transportation is even reflected metaphorically: the metaphors of vision used by Wolff for distinct intuition are taken up by Kant and applied to concepts and understanding whereas intuitions without concepts become blind. These findings reveal the importance of Christian Wolff's philosophy for the history of the concept of intuition not just for the revival for the Leibnizian concepts but also as a part of later developments leading to Kant's sensible intuition.

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Abstract

“Reassessing the Epistemic Relevance of the Non-Inferential Gettier Cases”

The classical Justified True Belief (JTB) analysis has long been challenged by Gettier-style counterexamples, particularly those involving inference from false premises. Inferential Gettier cases are epistemological counterexamples to the Justified True Belief analysis which rely on the inference from falsehood. Whereas the majority of the most common Gettier cases are such inferential cases, some, like the Fake Barn case, are not. These non-inferential cases have proven to be the most difficult types of counter examples to the JTB and other similar analyses, as evidenced by the Fake Barn case, for example. However, in this paper it is argued that the non-inferential cases may not be epistemically relevant for the sustainability of the Justified True Belief analysis. It will be argued that the non-inferential cases, namely the Fake Barn case, appear to be a discussion between the internalist and externalist notions of justification, and furthermore that the initial challenge posed by the Gettier cases were those only of inferential cases.

It will be shown that regardless of the account of justification, the Justified True Belief analysis can accommodate many varying notions of justification and withstand the epistemic challenges raised by the non-inferential cases like the Fake Barn case. This suggests that, firstly, the non-inferential cases, such as the Fake Barn case, ought to be regarded as a separate problem from the Gettier case, since their challenges, although similar, pertain to different epistemological discussions and epistemic challenges.

Secondly, it will be shown that the concurrent epistemological challenges that all analyses of knowledge must solve, are no larger problems for JTB than for any other analysis, and the JTB analysis is a sustainable framework for resolving them in a satisfactory manner.

Lastly, the role of the JTB analysis in the concurrent epistemological discussion is explored. It will be argued that the JTB framework remains a sustainable and relevant framework for defining knowledge in a way that can accommodate varying accounts of truth and justification without sacrificing its key strength as a simple and robust definition for knowledge.

Towards a pluralistic account of social norms' influence for behavioral policy

Social norms are widely recognized for their ubiquitous influence. This recognition has spurred a wide range of behavior change interventions that aim to leverage or alter the influence of social norms in order to solve health-related, social, or environmental problems (see Bicchieri, 2017). Despite their popularity, these social norm interventions (SNI) often yield heterogeneous results, evidence on long-term effectiveness is lacking, and their ethical aspects are rarely addressed. These concerns call for a better understanding of the mechanisms through which SNIs affect behavior. I argue that to attain this understanding, we should adopt a pluralistic perspective to what exactly social norms are and focus on integrating the various theoretical explanations of their influence.

My argument goes as follows:

When evaluating behavior change interventions, we are in large part interested in how they affect behavior, their mechanisms of action. Such knowledge helps us infer the conditions under which interventions would be effective, as well as possible ethical issues (see Grüne-Yanoff 2016). To address the potential and possible pitfalls of SNIs, however, our interests lie not only in the workings of some specific SNIs, but also in SNIs as a general field: what are the ways in which the influence of social norms can be intervened on, and when are different ways of doing so appropriate? In other words, we are interested in the mechanistic space of SNIs as a whole, the different ways in which existing and conceivable SNIs could operate. To map this space, theoretical explanations of social norms' influence are a promising starting point, since supposedly, they describe the processes that these interventions intervene on. However, social norms are a broad concept with persistent disagreement over what they are and how they work (Legros & Cislighi, 2020). Due to different explanatory aims, theories conceptualize social norms and explain their influence differently. For example, while most accounts agree that social sanctions are central in causing conformity, only some take them to be also necessary, and many exclude motivations based solely on the behavior of others or the influence of internalized normative attitudes, which others are happy to include.

Yet, since all the explanations arguably concern the same empirically intertwined social phenomena, they are all *prima facie* relevant for understanding SNIs. Sticking too closely to any specific account of social norms can obstruct the broader picture of possible mechanisms, which is why we should embrace the pluralism and seek to integrate the most promising explanations. This is, because we are ultimately not interested in what happens to social norms *per se* in SNIs, but to the processes and factors that cause and sustain norm-related behaviors. And the question of whether the various explanations can all be reasonably viewed as describing such processes and factors is independent of the question of whether those processes are necessary for, constitutive of, or merely empirically related to social norms proper. I defend my claims against two possible objections and show that a pluralistic account of social norms' influence is both internally coherent and relevant for the purpose of assessing norm-based policy.

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A code for killing? Assessing weak restrictionism and prohibitionism in the framework of modern warfare

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Several academics have called out for a complete prohibition on developing, deploying and using of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), arguing that machines, having no regard for human life and dignity should not be allowed to make a decision to kill a human being (Asaro, 2012, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 94) (Rosert & Sauer, 2019, *Global Policy*, 10). In his paper “Lethal autonomous weapon systems and respect for human dignity” (2022, *Frontiers in Big Data*, 5) Leonard Kahn argues that taking human dignity and technological advances into consideration, there could be situations where using LAWS would be morally right or even required, and thus further research and development of them is of utmost importance. Kahn calls this view *weak restrictionism* and proposes it as an alternative for the *prohibitionist* view, which aims for a total ban of LAWS. So, should we aim for a complete prohibition of LAWS or could there perhaps be some way they could be developed and utilized ethically?

In his paper, Kahn presents a set of case studies heavily based to a hypothetical futuristic setting, in which mankind has developed as he calls it, a “highly sophisticated LAWS”, that surpass the capabilities of humans to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. He argues that in situations where it is highly likely or known that such a LAWS would outperform human combatants when it comes to distinguishing a liable target for military action, it would be morally permissible or even required to deploy the LAWS instead of humans. By doing this he points out that the prohibitionist view of it never being morally permissible or required to deploy LAWS instead of humans is not in fact always true (Kahn, 2022). In this paper I argue that Kahn’s weak restrictionism is more plausible approach to LAWS than the prohibitionist view. I think Kahn did not even have to take his argument into the future framework to prove his point. So, I’d like to bring this conversation into 2025 and rebuild Kahn’s argument using contemporary military applications as case example and by doing so, I’ll show that Kahn’s weak restrictionism is a more feasible option even in contemporary framework.

Autonomous systems in warfare are advancing rapidly, and we are amidst a global arms race, starring artificial intelligence, with several nations developing their own systems for efficient surveillance and slaughtering. Right now, it is more important than ever to ethically assess the wars and all the different military applications being used in those wars. I do not wish to denounce the prohibitionist view completely, as I see there’s a lot of valuable discourse being held around the topic of human dignity and how we understand that, but I seriously doubt it is likely that we’ll reach a global ban of LAWS altogether.

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Group Belief as Interaction

Helen Longino notes that there are different notions of sociality in social epistemology (Longino 2022). Many of the theories of group belief so far have concentrated on a “thin” notion of sociality. This means that theories use individual states as the main basis for group states. Longino’s Critical Contextual Empiricism (CCE) is based on a “thick” notion of sociality: interaction. Drawing from the insights of CCE, I aim to develop a novel account of group belief that focuses on how individual beliefs are molded by interaction. I show that this novel account works better than existing accounts in understanding groups as epistemic and moral agents.

While CCE is not a view about belief, the CCE norms are based on the idea that epistemic activity resides in the interaction of community members. CCE norms call for avenues for and responsiveness to criticism, shared public standards and tempered equality of intellectual authority (Longino 1996). I reflect on the CCE norms and individual abilities for interaction to outline an interactional view of group belief. In this novel view, a group belief is a stable state of rationally formed views held by the group members about the world the group tries to navigate, brought about by belief revision in individuals due to stable relations of interaction as group members. The central idea is that individuals use each other as both sources of information and as sources of motivation for belief revision. The effect is that the group members’ views start to converge to form the group’s view about the world due to the members sharing evidence and adopting common goals, norms, morals etc. The resulting state can balance the epistemic bases of belief as well as the group’s goals, commitments, morals etc.

I consider belief evaluation in two central accounts of group belief: Lackey’s Group Agent Account (GAA) and Tuomela’s Joint Acceptance Account (JAA) (Lackey 2020, Tuomela 1995, 2013). GAA emphasizes epistemically based belief, as such it lacks the means to evaluate practically motivated group beliefs. In JAA, individual acceptance can be based on epistemic or practical motivations, but further work is needed to tell when joint acceptance is rational. I show that the interactional account, based on a “thick” aspect of sociality, can do both.

I close by considering some problems for an interactional account. The scope of group belief needs clarification, as interaction is not only a group phenomenon. Adopting a group’s norms, goals etc. is not entailed by epistemically relevant interaction (sharing of evidence). Thus, it is not clear how the view fits in with group intentions. I argue that these problems can be met with further research.

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Meaning in Life in Nietzsche

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The central concern of Nietzsche's philosophy is nihilism, the apparent meaninglessness of life that threatens modernity. With the famous metaphor of the death of God, Nietzsche describes the erosion of the possibility of finding transcendent foundations for our life, be they religious or metaphysical. Without such foundations, life lacks objective value and meaning. When the foundation of meaningful being evaporates, only futile, aimless becoming remains.

Yet Nietzsche is not content with mere description of nihilism, but aims also at its overcoming. When human striving and willing can no longer be tied to an objectively valuable foundation, this also sets for Nietzsche an emancipatory possibility for the will to give itself value, to set its own goals and give itself meaning. It seems then that Nietzsche is turning from the objective foundation of theology and metaphysics to the subjective one of willing.

Nietzsche's will centered solution to overcome nihilism seems problematical, however: Most contemporary theories of meaning in life would argue that mere subjectivity is not enough to make life meaningful. In fact, the very concept of meaning entails the need for subjective living to connect to something objective beyond it — be it divinity, value, community or something else. Thus, Nietzsche's remedy to meaninglessness seems to misapprehend what meaning is at bottom about.

My aim is to defend Nietzsche's notion of meaning in life against this accusation of solipsism. I argue that even though Nietzsche does indeed turn to the will itself as a central source for meaning, this does not happen in the absence of objective world. Instead, meaning for Nietzsche arises in the constant project of giving through will a being to becoming. While the world of becoming is objectively meaningless, it nonetheless is the objective world, understood as a constant flux and process. For Nietzsche, becoming presents a challenge to the will over and over again to give it meaning. Willing, then, does not make meaning out of nothing but as a response to the challenge presented by becoming. Thus, meaning in life for Nietzsche has both a subjective and an objective component.

Interpretability of Propositionally Quantified Theories of Truth

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Ian Rumfitt (2014; 2018) considers two distinct theories of truth given in a formal language based on classical first-order logic with the addition of propositional quantification. One—here ‘NARROW’—has been defended by Miroslava Andjelković and Timothy Williamson (2000), the other—here ‘WIDE’—by Stephen Read (2008).

Problems arise, if we take the theories as attempting to capture natural notions of truth and saying. (1) NARROW is not consistent with the natural transparency principle that sentences say what they appear to say, to which Andjelković and Williamson (2000, p. 215) commit. (2) NARROW, in conjunction with the weak transparency principle according to which, if a sentence says something, then it says what it appears to say, is committed to the somewhat surprising conclusion that e.g. liar sentences do not say anything at all, contrary to appearances. (3) WIDE is committed to the similarly somewhat surprising conclusion that every sentence that says anything says infinitely many things. (4) The conjunction of both theories leads to the absurd conclusion that things are however any sentence says they are. The culprits are NARROW’s *determinacy principle* and WIDE’s *closure principle*. According to the former, sentences say only one thing up to logical equivalence, and according to the latter, what sentences say is closed under logical consequence.

The present work shows that the theories are interpretable in a modest base truth theory by extending the base theory with definitions for two derivative notions of saying, and that on the interpretation all three theories agree on the truth values of all sentences. Hence, someone who adopts the theory formalised by the base theory as their official theory of truth can define two notions of saying for which the other theories hold, given that the official theory holds. Thus, with comparatively modest initial commitments, NARROW and WIDE can be had for “free” and entertained simultaneously. Further, given a transparency principle for the base notion of saying, it follows for the defined wide notion of saying. An unfortunate negative result that is proved is that if the weak transparency principle is added to NARROW, the resulting theory is *not* interpretable in the base theory extended with the transparency principle. The present discussion provides wiggle room to avoid problems (1–4) by accommodating all of the involved intuitions by means of using two distinct defined notions of saying and lightens the cost of NARROW and WIDE.

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Our Cosmic Significance and Causal Powers

Many have argued that humanity exhibits no cosmic significance (CS) because we are so tiny compared to the vast universe and we cannot make any significant impact beyond Earth. This lack of substantial causal powers is seen detrimental to our hopes of CS. However, Guy Kahane argues that even if we have no causal impact beyond Earth, we can be of immense CS. According to Kahane, something is cosmically significant if it deserves attention from the widest evaluative perspective – the cosmic standpoint. Thus, CS can be understood in terms of the difference one makes to overall intrinsic value in the universe, compared to other things. Consequently, if we are alone in the universe, life on Earth is a beacon of value in the cold, empty and indifferent cosmos. Nevertheless, some insist that it is not enough to make a difference to the valence of the universe solely by existing. Instead, they argue that for CS a causal component is needed, and we lack such causal powers.

I want to challenge the idea that we cannot be cosmically significant in the causal sense. I argue that in the foreseeable future, we may be significant in a way that matches both Kahane's and the causal understanding of CS. The suggested route to CS is by seeding lifeless exoplanets with microorganisms. Such seeding demonstrates causal powers beyond the Solar System and may significantly affect the overall intrinsic value of the universe. It gives a chance for new actors to emerge on the 'cosmic stage'. Thus, it merits attention from a cosmic or at least a galactic perspective.

The possibility of directed panspermia raises some interesting puzzles and implications for cosmic meaning. For example, seeding may entail an intergenerational trade-off by increasing the CS of individuals who contribute to it while decreasing the collective CS of potential far-future generations. As a further example, some have argued that it is unlikely that disseminating life beyond our Solar System will benefit humans greatly. However, if exoplanetary seeding is a way to become cosmically significant then it would benefit humanity because it would fulfil a deep collectively shared yearning for meaning. Yet, it should be noted that in a strict sense this would not give a reason for seeding from an anthropocentric perspective if Kahane's value thesis is also needed for cosmic significance because the theory of value needs to be non-anthropocentric for exoplanetary seeding to increase value in the universe.

Transformative Ethics: How Ethics Should Contribute to Solving Societal Challenges

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Abstract

What should be the role of ethics in remedying injustices, such as climate injustice and many other challenges of sustainability? Do we need new forms of ethical research to correct prevailing moral wrongs? Contemporary ethical research follows the common culture and practices of the academic world through focusing on detached theoretical analysis of ethical questions discussed mainly among professional ethicists. Although this type of ethical research, that I call ‘orthodox ethics’, may importantly contribute to the understanding of normative questions, it has its limitations. To increase the beneficial societal impact of ethical research, I propose novel roles for ethics which also require novel research methodologies. Firstly, to scale up the epistemic benefits of ethical research, I propose developing democratized ethical research that I call ‘citizen ethics’, in lines with the movement of citizen science. Secondly, to eliminate bias from ethical research and to foster internal moral development, I propose using ‘methodological witnessing’ as a part of research process, that is, witnessing the real-life implications of ethical views and one’s genuine inner responses, such as affectivity, along the research process. Thirdly, I propose combining ethics with interdisciplinary knowledge to create ‘action-oriented ethics’ that supports doing, not only knowing, the right action. Ethics could, thus, help to transform societies fundamentally.

Shame and evaluations

Shame is commonly described as an unpleasant self-conscious emotion, accompanied by a negative self-evaluation. But this is usually where the consensus ends. In this presentation I limit the examination to the relationship between shame and evaluation. It is obvious that often the experience of shame cannot be explained without the accompanying self-evaluation. For example, if I feel shame for breaking some of my important values or get caught in a nasty lie, it would seem that I have to judge my actions as wrong and, as a result, myself as shameful. So, it is no wonder that shame and self-evaluation are usually seen to be closely intertwined, and it would be very difficult to make a theory of shame without evaluation playing a central role in it. Accordingly, the majority of the mainstream theories holds that self-evaluation is a necessary condition for shame in one way or another.

The idea of self-evaluation also incorporates the idea that in order to feel ashamed, one must also accept that evaluation. But is this really always the case? For example, in the case of bullying at school, does the child need to understand and accept why he or she is ridiculed so that it can cause shame? It is quite common for the content of ridicule to be precisely what we do not accept, yet we experience shame. In addition, attitude of contempt may have no particular content at all. It seems that in order to feel shame at least the content of the evaluation is not necessary to accept. So why do so many insist on the view that evaluation is necessary for the emotion of shame to arise? I believe that this is due to a more general understanding of the intentional nature of emotions.

The intentional structure of emotions relies on the distinction between a particular object and a formal object. In the case of fear, the particular object is anything a person can be afraid of. For example, a snake may be the particular object of fear. The formal object is considered to arise from an evaluation that an “object” has a certain property that we ourselves place in that object. In fear formal object might be something like “that which constitutes danger”. The snake in itself is not, and it has not, a property of being dangerous. We just evaluate it – and all the other things that we are afraid of – as such. So, in order to fear the snake, I have to evaluate it to be dangerous. According to this understanding, evaluation is already built into the intentional structure of all emotions.

In my presentation, I argue that in the case of shame, the division into formal and particular object turns out to be rather useless in explaining the nature of shame. How I see it, at best it can only give appropriateness conditions to shame. And if this is true, the claimed necessary connection between shame and evaluation cannot be justified by the intentional structure of emotions. In light of this, and with a few examples, I suggest that the emotion of shame does not always require self-evaluation to be possible.